

To: Legislative Management Committee
From: **Scott Dunaway**, Director of Political Internships and Assistant Dean, College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, Brigham Young University
Adam Brown, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Brigham Young Univ.
Re: Utah State Legislature Internship program
Date: June 18, 2013

For many years, Brigham Young University (BYU) and the University of Utah have combined to provide most of the students serving as interns with the state legislature. We deeply appreciate the Legislature's generosity in providing this opportunity for our students. This is a unique and valuable program that changes the lives of students and helps strengthen their commitment to public service and civic engagement.

We understand that other universities in the state desire to expand their internship programs and are requesting that the Legislature Management Committee increase the number of interns hired each year. We appreciate that they are not requesting that BYU or the University of Utah be allotted fewer internship slots, but rather that the overall size of the program be expanded to accommodate more students. We support expanding the overall size of the internship program.

BYU student demand exceeds the supply of internships

BYU typically provides 25-28 interns for each General Session. However, nearly every year we have more qualified students applying for the internship than we have positions allotted to us. Most of the students we turn away are qualified enough that they would perform well if given the opportunity. We saw clear evidence of this in the 2010 General Session. Two months after our intern pool was selected, we were asked shortly before the session to provide 5 additional interns. We reached into our alternate pool and filled the gap. These supposedly "second-tier" students performed with enthusiasm and expertise equal to the originally admitted students. We are confident that BYU could supply 5-7 additional interns each year without a drop in quality.

BYU is committed to this internship program

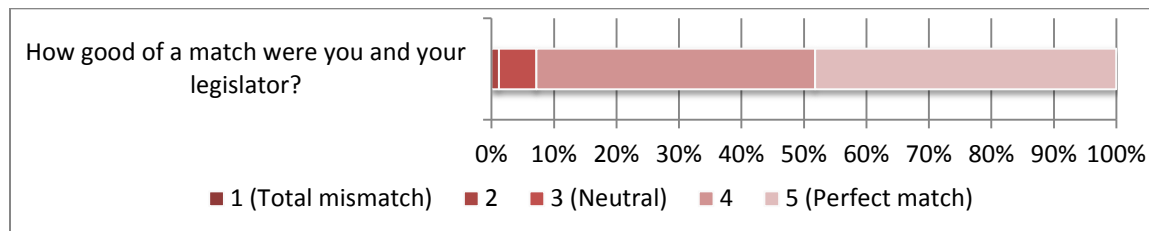
The university has committed substantial resources to making the Legislative internship program successful. Besides administrative and staff support, 40% of a faculty member's (Professor Adam Brown) teaching load is designated for training and supervising the interns from BYU—a substantial commitment to a single internship program. In addition to supervising the students, Professor Brown teaches an upper-division course, "Utah Legislative Politics," to all interns before they participate, and he has produced a 200-page internship handbook. As a result of this course, BYU interns arrive knowing how to track legislation, read bills, write talking points, search the Utah Code, write emails to constituents, manage social media, and more. We want our legislative interns to succeed because we want the Legislature to succeed.

This training course could easily accommodate a larger intern cohort. If, on the other hand, BYU were allotted fewer interns for some reason, the university would almost certainly reconsider its willingness to commit so much faculty time to internship training and supervision.

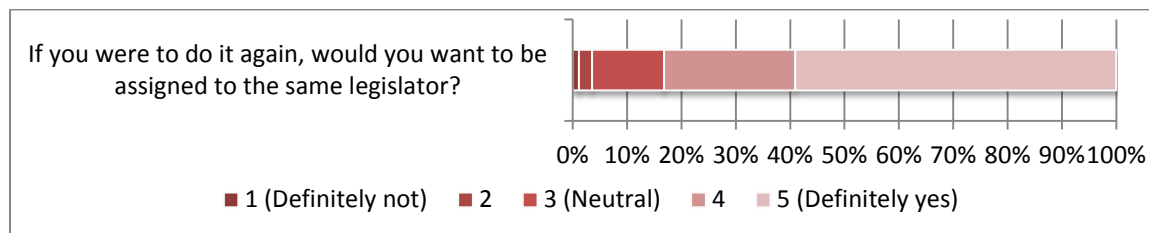
This internship changes lives

Each year, we send an anonymous survey to our interns after they complete their legislative internships. We will share some information from that survey here in hopes of assisting the Committee in its deliberations. The results here reflect responses from the past four years.

Interns develop immense respect for the legislators they assist. When we ask interns to rate on a five-point scale “how good of a match” they were with their legislator, 93% choose the top two categories. The scale ranged from 1, “A total mismatch,” to 5, “A perfect match.” No student in four years has chosen the lowest category, and only 1 student (1.2%) has chosen the second-lowest.



The results are similar when we ask interns whether they would want to work with the same legislator if they did it all again, with 83% choosing the top two categories. Here, the scale ranged from 1 (“Definitely not”) to 5 (“Definitely yes”). Well over half (59%) chose the highest category.



Some questions in the survey are open-ended. Reading over interns’ (anonymous) responses to these open-ended questions shows just how profoundly this internship affects their lives:

- “Applying for this internship was the most important decision I made during my undergraduate experience.”
- “This has been the best college experience I’ve had thus far.”
- “Other than the long-term effects of my full-time [LDS] mission, this internship has had a more positive effect on my professional development than anything else.”
- “I loved the experience and would do it all over again in a heartbeat.”

- “I couldn’t have gained that experience anywhere else unless I ran for office.”
- “I think that the experiences from the internship were vital to understanding my direction for a career and to gain the necessary contacts to break into the political system.”
- “I gained a real desire to remain informed and involved in local politics.”

We are confident that students from the other Utah schools have a similar reaction to their experience with the Legislature. This internship provides an unmatched opportunity for undergraduate students to witness the political process and prepare for a lifetime of civic engagement and community leadership. We applaud the Legislature for creating this opportunity and hope to make it available to even more of our students in the future.

